

Inspection of Bledlow Ridge School

Church Lane, Bledlow Ridge, High Wycombe, Buckinghamshire HP14 4AZ

Inspection dates: 21 and 22 November 2023

Overall effectiveness	Good
The quality of education	Good
Behaviour and attitudes	Good
Personal development	Outstanding
Leadership and management	Good
Early years provision	Good
Previous inspection grade	Outstanding

This school was last inspected under section 5 of the Education Act 2005 13 years ago and judged 'Outstanding' under a previous inspection framework. This reflected the school's overall effectiveness under the inspection framework in use at the time.

From then until November 2020, the school was exempted by law from routine inspection, so there has been a longer gap than usual between graded inspections under section 5 of the Act. Judgements in this report are based on the current inspection framework and also reflect changes that may have happened at any point since the last graded inspection.

What is it like to attend this school?

This is a happy village school where everyone is welcomed and made to feel part of the community. Relationships are warm and nurturing. Pupils know that staff care about them and are always there to listen and support them if they are worried about something.

The school's values, such as curiosity, empathy and respect, are lived out daily. Pupils describe how these values help them to make the right choices and to be kind and caring to others. They also learn that to achieve success they need to be resilient when they encounter new challenges.

Pupils make the most of all that the school has to offer. From 'hedgehog club' to sporting clubs, there is something for everyone. Pupils benefit from extensive opportunities to make music, and all pupils from Year 1 learn to play a musical instrument. Enrichment weeks offer pupils inspiring and memorable learning experiences.

Staff have high expectations and enable pupils to build the 'foundations for a love of learning' successfully. Most pupils achieve well and enjoy learning. Their performance in the end of key stage 2 national assessments is consistently strong. Pupils leave the school well prepared and confident to embrace the challenges of secondary education.

What does the school do well and what does it need to do better?

The new leadership team has worked tirelessly to strengthen the school's curriculum. This hard work has paid off. Pupils benefit from an interesting, ambitious and well-sequenced curriculum. Additionally, staff have clear guidance about what and when they need to teach new content. This provides consistency across the school and helps to reduce staff workload. Staff are fully on board, appreciate these improvements and enjoy working here. Governors too have played their part in providing clear direction for the school and supporting it to maintain the momentum of change.

Staff have good subject knowledge, plan interesting lessons and explain new concepts clearly. This helps pupils to build their knowledge across a breadth of subjects. However, some pupils do not always achieve as well as they could. This is because the curriculum is not consistently adapted well enough in all subjects to meet pupils' needs. As a result, sometimes pupils find it difficult to get started with or complete learning tasks. This is particularly so for pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities and for pupils who find learning more challenging.

Strong induction processes and the school's positive partnership with parents enable children in early years to settle quickly into school. They soon develop their confidence and become curious, independent learners. Children learn how to follow

routines and how to get along with others. Throughout the school, staff have high expectations of behaviour, and the school is a harmonious community. Respect and courtesy are the norm.

As soon as pupils join the school, any additional needs are quickly identified and support put in place. This includes a range of targeted help for reading, writing and communication. Most staff check how well pupils have learned and remembered what they have been taught. However, processes to check what pupils have learned are not fully effective across the school. As a result, not all staff identify or address gaps and misconceptions in pupils' learning as well as they could.

The school's new approach to teaching reading is successful. Younger pupils get off to a good start in learning to read. They soon acquire phonics knowledge and delight in the success of being able to read. Reading continues to be a priority as pupils progress into key stages 1 and 2. Class texts and regular reading lessons successfully develop pupils' comprehension, fluency and enjoyment. Pupils acquire new vocabulary, which supports their learning in other subjects.

The school provides an exceptional range of extra-curricular clubs and enrichment activities. These include many trips to places far and wide and a residential visit. Pupils enthuse about these and enjoy the healthy competition afforded by inter-school events. These experiences combine to enrich pupils' learning significantly. The different pupil leadership groups help to develop pupils' sense of citizenship and enable them to contribute to decision-making.

Pupils develop a strong understanding of equality. In religious education, pupils learn about faith and beliefs. They learn that different religions have many commonalities, such as prayer, worship and holy books. Pupils talk confidently about the importance of the protected characteristics and of values such as democracy. They learn about significant figures in modern history who have changed our world for the better.

Pupils and parents know that every day in school is important, and this is reflected in pupils' very high attendance rates. Parents have nothing but praise for the school and support the school wholeheartedly.

Safeguarding

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

There is a strong culture of care in the school. Staff are alert to anything that may indicate a concern. They feel confident in reporting their concerns, knowing that they will be listened to and any worries acted on. When needed, additional help and support are provided for families. This includes support from the local authority family support team. Recruitment procedures are thorough, ensuring that all the necessary checks are completed for staff and adults working in the school.

However, there are some minor weaknesses in the school's safeguarding arrangements. The school has not always been proactive in sharing information as early as possible with other agencies when problems are first emerging. In addition, record-keeping is not as consistent as it could be to enable leaders to gain a clear enough understanding of safeguarding concerns over time. Leaders are already taking swift action to strengthen these aspects of the school's work.

What does the school need to do to improve?

(Information for the school and appropriate authority)

- In a small number of classes, staff do not consistently identify and address pupils' misconceptions or weaknesses in their learning. This risks errors and misconceptions becoming embedded and hinders pupils' learning. The school needs to ensure that assessment processes are fully effective so that errors, gaps and misconceptions in pupils' learning are systematically addressed.
- Not all staff adapt learning well enough to meet pupils' needs, particularly for pupils who have barriers to their learning. As a result, some pupils do not always achieve as well as they could. The school needs to ensure that staff have the knowledge they need to adapt learning more consistently and effectively to meet pupils' needs.

How can I feed back my views?

You can use [Ofsted Parent View](#) to give Ofsted your opinion on your child's school, or to find out what other parents and carers think. We use information from Ofsted Parent View when deciding which schools to inspect, when to inspect them and as part of their inspection.

The Department for Education has further [guidance](#) on how to complain about a school.

Further information

You can search for [published performance information](#) about the school.

In the report, '[disadvantaged pupils](#)' is used to mean pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND); pupils who meet the [definition of children in need of help and protection](#); pupils receiving statutory local authority support from a social worker; and pupils who otherwise meet the criteria used for deciding the school's [pupil premium funding](#) (this includes pupils claiming free school meals at any point in the last six years, looked after children (children in local authority care) and/or children who left care through adoption or another formal route).

School details

Unique reference number	110209
Local authority	Buckinghamshire
Inspection number	10267876
Type of school	Primary
School category	Community
Age range of pupils	4 to 11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	176
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair of governing body	Zoe Williams
Headteacher	Natasha Harrison
Website	www.bledlowridge.bucks.sch.uk
Dates of previous inspection	15 and 16 July 2010, under section 5 of the Education Act 2005

Information about this school

- The headteacher and deputy headteacher joined the school in September 2022.
- The school currently uses one registered alternative provider.
- Since the previous inspection, the number of pupils on roll has steadily grown. There are now seven classes in the school, including the Reception Year.

Information about this inspection

The inspectors carried out this graded inspection under section 5 of the Education Act 2005.

- Inspections are a point-in-time judgement about the quality of a school's education provision.
- This was the first routine inspection the school received since the COVID-19 pandemic began. Inspectors discussed the impact of the pandemic with the school and have taken that into account in their evaluation of the school.
- Inspectors carried out deep dives in these subjects: reading, mathematics, history and physical education. For each deep dive, inspectors held discussions about the

curriculum, visited a sample of lessons, spoke to teachers, spoke to some pupils about their learning and looked at samples of pupils' work.

- Inspectors also considered the curriculum and sampled pupils' work in other subjects.
- To evaluate the effectiveness of safeguarding, inspectors: reviewed the single central record; took account of the views of leaders, staff and pupils; and considered the extent to which the school has created an open and positive culture around safeguarding that puts pupils' interests first.
- Inspectors met with the headteacher and other leaders.
- Inspectors considered the views of staff and pupils during discussions and through their responses to Ofsted's surveys.
- Inspectors took account of parents' responses to the online survey, Ofsted Parent View, including parents' free-text comments. An inspector spoke to parents at the end of the second day of the inspection.

Inspection team

Sue Cox, lead inspector

His Majesty's Inspector

Chris Toye

Ofsted Inspector

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